



### Vaccine Availability and Usage:

1. Physicians must register at [www.TexasFlu.org](http://www.TexasFlu.org) to order the H1N1 vaccine. It will be distributed exclusively through the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) rather than traditional vaccine distribution channels.
2. The vaccines will be sent in increments based on the practice's patient population and the percentage that belongs to specified priority groups. The intent of the DSHS is to get priority populations vaccinated first. DSHS states that eventually there will be enough vaccines for all those who wish to be vaccinated. Texas expects to receive 13 million doses by the end of January.
3. Patients requesting H1N1 vaccines who are not in a priority group can go to public clinics. A list of public clinics by zip code can be found on the HCMS Web site, [www.hcms.org](http://www.hcms.org).
4. The vaccines will arrive in LAIV and/or injection form. The LAIV (nasal spray) is **only** recommended for HEALTHY people ages 2-49 years.
5. The vaccine will confer protection from the virus eight to 10 days after administered.
6. A single injection (one dose) will suffice to protect individuals over age 10; however, children under 10 should receive two doses.
7. The H1N1 vaccine can be administered at the same time as the injectable vaccine against the seasonal flu. However, administering both the live attenuated seasonal and the live attenuated H1N1 influenza vaccines at the same visit is NOT recommended because of concerns about competition between the two vaccine viruses. If you have only live vaccines for both seasonal and H1N1 influenza available, you should separate the doses of the two live vaccines by at least four weeks.
9. Go to [www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/recommendations](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/recommendations), for information on the use of antiviral medications.
10. The Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) released an algorithm designed to assist physicians and those under their supervision in identifying indicators of and responses to symptoms of flu-like illness (i.e., fever with cough or sore throat) in adults (>18 years). The algorithm can be accessed at [www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/clinicians/pdf/adultalgorithm.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/clinicians/pdf/adultalgorithm.pdf).

### CDC's Priority Vaccine Recommendations:

H1N1 Vaccine	Seasonal Flu	
X	X	Pregnant women
X	X	People who live with or care for babies under 6 months of age
X	X	Children and young people age 6 months to 18 years
X		Anyone ages 5 to 24 years
	X	People 50 years of age and older
X	X	People ages 24 to 64 with certain chronic medical conditions
X	X	Health care and emergency medical services workers
	X	People who live in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities
	X	* People who live with or care for those at high risk for complications from flu (except infants)

\* The CDC defines high risk for H1N1 influenza as adults and children with: chronic pulmonary, cardiovascular, hepatic, hematological, neurologic, neuromuscular, metabolic disorders, and/or immuno-suppression, including those caused by medications or HIV.

### Emergency Preparedness for Your Practice:

Plan now for what is expected to be a very unusual, active flu season.

Plans should include:

- Physicians and practice staff should receive the seasonal **and** H1N1 flu vaccines;
- Cross train employees so that staff can cover for each other as staff becomes sick;
- Have staff work from home, allowing productivity from those who are well enough to work but for various reasons cannot come to work;
- Plan for a surge of individuals seeking care and increased demand for information, including a demand on your telephone system;
- Train staff properly to convey your practice's policy to your patients on H1N1 vaccination and treatment.
- Ask your staff to perform phone triage to determine if calling patients have H1N1 symptoms;
- Keep patients with H1N1 symptoms isolated from other patients, if possible;
- Inform patients who are on the high priority list that they should receive the H1N1 immunization in addition to seasonal flu vaccine; and
- A decision algorithm is available through DSHS at [www.dshs.state.tx.us/txflu/DCHHS-H1N1.pdf](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/txflu/DCHHS-H1N1.pdf).

### Public Health Messages for Your Patients:

- Wash hands frequently or use alcohol sanitizer;
- Cough into arm, rather than hand;
- Stay home when you are sick, at least until there is no fever for 24 hours without medication;
- Be prepared to be sick;
- Be vaccinated for seasonal and, if appropriate, H1N1 flu;
- Do not give aspirin or aspirin containing medicine to children under age 18; and
- Get pneumococcal vaccine, as recommended.

### Reimbursement:

- Reimbursement for the vaccine is not available since the vaccine is distributed free of charge. However, reimbursement is available for the following:
  - Evaluating and treating persons with H1N1; and
  - Administering H1N1 vaccines.
- Specific codes can be found at: [www.ama-assn.org](http://www.ama-assn.org).
- HCMS developed a coding sheet with coding information for six plans plus Medicare and Medicaid, which is available at [www.hcms.org](http://www.hcms.org), click on *H1N1*

### Stay Informed:

Stay informed on the H1N1 virus by visiting these sites often:

- [www.texasflu.org](http://www.texasflu.org) – DSHS (1-888-963-7111)
- [www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance) – CDC
- [www.hcms.org](http://www.hcms.org) – Click on H1N1 on the HCMS home page
- **HCMS Direct** – Receive e-mails on public health issues by going to [www.hcms.org](http://www.hcms.org) and click on *News* in the left margin and then click on *HCMS Direct – Public Health Issues*.
- [www.hcphe.org/flu/pandemicplan.htm](http://www.hcphe.org/flu/pandemicplan.htm) – Harris County Public Health & Environmental Services
- [www.houstontx.gov/health/swineflu.html](http://www.houstontx.gov/health/swineflu.html) – City of Houston Department of Health and Human Services

➤ *Disregard any past advice sent and monitor the HCMS Web site at [www.hcms.org](http://www.hcms.org), for changes in current advice.*

*Created by the Harris County Medical Society*

*Updated: Dec 2, 2009. For updated flyer, go to [www.hcms.org](http://www.hcms.org).*